

# negative reinforcement

AND NOW, AN INTERVIEW WITH

PERTH, WA HARDCORE BAND:

JON: VOCALS

LEE: BASS

OLI: DRUMS

MIKEY: GUITAR (not present)

If you like mean, uncompromising, brutal, nihilistic, abrupt hardcore annihilation, then chances are you'll be into NR. I'm not a powerviolence/grind/whatever fanboy or anything but I know what I like, and I'm really glad I get to see these guys play on a regular basis.

(Mandurah Mutants house-show photos by John Kelly)

Let's just dive right into the gossip. An interview you did a while back seemed to piss a lot of local people off - and subsequently your At War With Hardcore tape is covered in quotes bitching about the band.

J: Yeah, that was stuff that we'd nicked from various forms of social media, Facebook and Instagram etc.. I think that was stuff that Mikey had seen people say about us. I think a lot of it was in the wake of that interview, which is what apparently pissed off a lot of hardcore kids, and there was like a backlash on Instagram or whatever.

Was that in a 'zine or on a blog?

J: It was a 'zine.

L: It's Mike Banting's one, right?

J: Yeah, it's called Free Your Mind. I re-read it the other day actually and I was like "Oh, yeah?".

L: I decided to re-read it when we put the tape out, just to see what it was all about and I still don't understand the rage, at all - I really don't get it.

Were you trying to be antagonistic at the time?

L: We were trying to be realistic, and still are.. but apparently RINGWORM are like a cult.

'Cuz there was that review of when you opened for.. FRENZAL RHOMB was it? With the BORN AGAINST bit-

L: Oh, that was the SICK OF IT ALL show - that was the show where Jon said the "suck my lizard" thing.

Right, and I think the guy said that you didn't

seem particularly "honoured" to be on stage with these "legendary" bands or whatever.

J: It's just fucking around.. cuz they're all New York bands, and I dunno - I'm not really a big SOIA fan, I was just taking the piss out of that whole CBGB's/ABC No Rio rivalry. The funny thing is it didn't piss off any of the bands.

O: Yeah, we were chatting to them about it downstairs and they didn't give a fuck. They thought it was funny.

J: Yeah Roger Miret thought it was funny, just the stupid Perth fan-boys didn't like it. *laughs* They've probably never listened to that BORN AGAINST record.

L: That reviewer had no fucking idea, he just said "oh and they said something about sucking my lizard". He's just some kid though - it's not that hard to become a reviewer.

J: It's all pretty dumb. Like I was saying, I re-read that interview the other day and it's like, usually if I re-read something that I've said maybe six-seven months ago, I'm usually like "Man, I'm a tosser" - But I was just being honest with all those things. I wasn't really trying to be antagonistic, it's just really exasperating - the hardcore scene, in general. The conclusion I've come to now is, there's always going to be a bunch of morons. I'm probably a bit more laissez-faire now, hey. Just let them be morons, there's no point. And it's got to the point now where we've said our opinions, there's no point re-stating it because it gets people angry.

L: The funny thing is though that we are still now - I say we, but me - me more than others I think, I'm still getting people asking me questions about this shit. The record that we wrote in three jams and released.. Things that we don't care about. Like trying to psychoanalyse why we do the things



that we do about hardcore, and it's just so fucking irrelevant. It's such a small slice of what we do musically as well. People just cling onto it.

It seems people like to accuse Perth of being shit all the time, but if anyone agrees and says "Yeah, it is shit" publically then those same people take massive offense. Is that something you've come across?

L: Yeah.. It's the same group of people who are nice to your face and shit to your back, y'know? Like it's the same attitude. Anyone will say Perth is shit, because it kind of is - but if you put it on vinyl..

J: Yeah, you can think that your approach to punk or hardcore and the way you think about it is the sensible way of looking at it. But then when you interpret these other bands that we're criticized and stuff, their approach to everything about music, the scene - whatever is completely different to what I think. It's totally alien. I think it's just that they're coming at it from a different angle, from listening to a lot of different stuff than.. For them it's all about solidarity or some kind of ill-placed notion of unity. Just clichés, clichéd terms that are based in an abstraction. And you try and get into that, and criticize it or say something about it, and it just doesn't get you anywhere. Even when people are angry at you in this town, people just burn you in a forum on the internet or

something.. it's just embarrassing in general. I think we've done our dash with that, we've moved on - or been moved on.

L: Yeah, we've been ousted more than anything else. I think a part of me was when this started escalating (still very much in digital realm), I was starting to think "Is it going to get to the point where there's a physicality? Like real life face-to-face confrontation?", and the deeper we delve into it the more I realised it just doesn't work like that anymore. And that's disappointing more than anything else. We've had two different major Perth hardcore bands talk shit about us on stage, and both times it was in a situation where we weren't even there to respond. Heaven forbid we should be there and-

O: Oh, that REFRAIN show?

L: Yeah that REFRAIN show.

O: That's because Jon and I were there earlier watching MINDLESS, then we left right before REFRAIN played. They waited until we left and then said something.

L: That's the thing.. There's no confrontation, none of that shit.

"It's important to realise that even your deviation from the path of mainstream norms and values is part of a predictable system."





You were saying a while ago that you're now getting more shows or offers of shows out of state than locally.

J: Yeah it's gotten to that point now that we don't get many shows in Perth. Not that we're complaining or "expect" anything different, but at the moment it's very quiet - We try to get bigger shows and stuff, but it's not really happening. I think it's just a phase for the scene, and for the band that we need to try and persevere with I guess. But it's strange. We've gone from playing a lot, to not at all. There was a weird stage where we were doing what we were doing and being quite outspoken, but still getting offered lots of shows within that scene. Which was no sweat off our backs, we were happy to play. But then it seemed like eventually it took about a year to catch on that we were critical of the hardcore scene, and then we stopped getting shows. We're in that desert now of not playing many gigs, but it's kind of what we signed up for I guess.

Wasn't there something about the TRAGEDY show that's coming up?

J: We were hoping we could weasel our way onto it, because we like TRAGEDY a lot. It's been really quiet with regards to hearing about a show.

O: Plus we're up against all these other bands in Perth that want to play.

J: Yeah everyone else in Perth wants to play it, and fair enough to them, y'know. Obviously it's down to whoever's putting on the show, but I don't really have high hopes of us playing it, but we'll see.

O: It's just because we're in a weird limbo.

L: We are in a bit of a dead-spot musically and socially.

J: We don't have any contemporaries in Perth. Not contemporaries - bands who are kind of doing a similar thing. We're always stuck in the middle, and that does make it harder. You notice it when you go somewhere like Melbourne and there's more bands we could play with, but that's just the way it is. Either way I guess we'll go to TRAGEDY.

You're still putting out quite a lot of stuff though. You just recorded again for a new 7", right? Are you recording everything you're coming up with or what?

O: We've scrapped heaps of stuff.

L: The 7" that's going to be out late January, or early February has eight tracks - it was originally going to be a sixteen song LP, but we killed half of it. So we have done the cull thing, but most of the time everything that we record we do it because it's progress, and we're interested in it - not because we don't like the old shit or anything like that. I guess that's what it comes down to though, and why we're not so bothered with being offered so many shows. We're doing it because we like producing music, and not because we want people to mosh to the same shit that we've been playing for ten years.

J: It's funny, we do seem to write quite quickly, but as Lee says we end up cutting a lot of material and adjusting our tuning and stuff like that, changing the sound a little bit - so it's been a progression. It's just been a very prolific band,

I've played in bands where the writing process is a lot slower, but the way we go about it, we seem to smash out the songs fairly quick. I like to think at a decent quality, y'know, it's not just smashing out whatever, recording recording. And it's also quite alienating as well always having new material, because you don't give the people that might want to see you a chance to familiarize themselves with what you're playing. But at the same time you can't really hold back and let stuff that you're about to record stagnate, you've got to keep recording at the rate you're writing. That's the main issue - alienating people who watch you, and the other one is the financial issue. Finding the resources to release the records as you're... I mean, throughout our existence we've either self-released or released on indie labels, so we've never had swathes of money thrown at us for either recording or pressing. But it has to be this way I think, really.

Is that recording happening at your practice room or a proper studio?

J: A mixture, hey.

O: Well, the new one we did the drums at Bergerk - who did like EXTORTION and stuff - They sound pretty good, we did bass there as well so we just have to do the guitars separately. It's going to sound a lot bigger than the other stuff we've recorded I reckon. We're going to get the same guy as last time - Will Killingsworth to mix it as well.

Where are you pressing it all?

L: Gotta Groove. We've done two records through them now, and one through Morpheus. It's all US stuff, it's all real small plants. Gotta Groove is like a handful of people-type thing. But it's cheap and they use recycled vinyl.

O: Their turnover is really fast.

L: Yeah their turnover is fast too, but the recycled vinyl thing is great which is why we're sticking with GG from now on, because it's all the scrap shit and it's half the price basically.

Like melted down old records?

L: It's all the stuff cut away from other records, they just stick it together and make records out of that.

J: Yeah it's good for punk musicians. Pirates Press does that as well, and maybe Morpheus does that as well. And all of those three are quite similar in price. But financially we just kinda scrape it together, we're all pretty much working part-time or studying or whatever. Usually with a bit of financial assistance from whatever label's releasing, but we scrape it together an use whatever connections we can to do stuff like artwork or whatever. It's done on a budget, but that urgency aids the process. We were just saying about this newest recording - up until this point we've kind of used DIY recording equipment and recorded in jam room-type set-up, but still fairly decent eight or sixteen-track gear, and you can get a really good result with that, then we've chosen to mix it with people that mix bands we like, like Will Killingsworth who's mixed MIND ERASER and HOAX and those kind of modern hardcore bands, he's done our latest 7". Hopefully he'll do the LP as well. With the LP, our intention was to record the whole thing in a studio and access a local music grant, but we had to compromise and do drums in the studio then we'll

go back and track guitars and vocals in a jam room. You'll get a similar result.

O: It'll sound pretty good I reckon.

J: Yeah, 'cuz drums - you get a great sound in the studio, and the rest of it is negligible y'know? That's the way we've gone with the most recent one anyway.

Speaking of recording and stuff, on the split with STARVATION - it sounds like there's not just multiple guitar tracks, but really more like two separate parts. Have you ever considered getting a second-guitarist?

L: The funny thing about that split is that it was like the last little bit of that sound we were doing, and after that we went "you know what, we don't want to do the weird shit that might translate a bit better if you do double guitars and things like that." I think that was probably part of it, 'cuz we were either going to go in a direction that was going to require some kind of extra stuff, or go in the direction we're at now which is just heavy hardcore. We've talked about getting a second guitarist and whatever before, but it's never been that necessary.

J: Yeah Lee's right, that split was kinda like the last recording we did before we down-tuned, I changed my vocals a bit as well. And yeah, we were thinking about getting a second guitarist but the new stuff's progressed more, or it's continued a little bit on the trajectory of that split, but more down the pathway of metallic hardcore. It's not Powerviolence stuff like INFEST, CROSSED OUT or whatever, but it's not straight-up grind - but it's still very hardcore punk, but a lot of grind, black-metal, like the punky end of death metal influences going on. That's probably where we've solidified, in what we're doing now, and we'll carry on along that trajectory. It's taken a while to get there but that's what's what we're doing now.

Is that something all of you have been aware of, or is one person driving those changes with the songs they're writing?

L: It's kind of come full circle in a way, because our initial intention was to do metallic hardcore, but it was meant to be more like INTEGRITY and things like that, but then we got into stuff like TOTAL ABUSE. The thing is, we all operate together, so we've gone through all that stuff and we've kind of come back to do a better job of what we set out to do in the first place. But it's never been an intentional thing, it just so happens to be what everyone in the band's listened to one way or another. Just what's sounded good to us. There's not really a selection process.

J: I guess the original brief was heavy, thrash-influenced hardcore with a bit of bounce like the better end of NY hardcore. Then we started flirting with that kind of weirdo hardcore punk modern DIE KREUZEN take on stuff, and then - Lee's right, it's come full circle. I guess we've played together for long enough now that we've become better at writing together, and the riffs have come along too. It hasn't really been the most focused thing, there's a few songs that are out here and there, but we've pulled it in now. I think it takes a while to get to that point sometimes.



magnified here by the fact that it's a small town, but it's definitely not unique to Perth, at all.

**L:** It is unique to that particular style of hardcore. There are certain flavours that are more likely to cause beige non-response from the audience than others. We played those shows in Melbourne, and we got to play some vanilla hardcore show on the same day as playing a show with RORT and TRENCH SISTERS and EXTORTION. It's a totally different vibe, it's just weird that there's a style of heavy music that elicits zero fucking response from it's audience. Absolutely zero. It may as well be a seated show.

**L:** I'm still quite surprised how insular some of the local cliques are. It's like, you run into a new group of people and they don't know many people else outside, they don't go to any gigs other than their little circle's gigs.

**J:** There used to be a lot of mixed bills in Perth. I guess because there weren't as many people involved, so bands had to play together. But then it grew to the point where they could separate off, and now it's just isolated little scenes.

**O:** Yeah it used to be JAWS, then PAINT IT RED, EXTORTION, BURN FOR ME and every sub-genre playing one gig.

**L:** There was camaraderie and involvement and people you could actually talk to who happened to be playing different shit to you, but now it's kind of - there's just very few people in Perth who are able to relate to each other inter-scene.

**J:** I don't reckon it's getting worse, I reckon it's always been kind of shit. I've experienced this a few times with people.

There'll be an exodus of people from the scene and then an influx of new people, and the old guard always gets really bummed out cuz they're ousted by these new kids, and the new kids "don't do it as good as they did", but they themselves supplanted another group of older people. It's nothing fucking new, hey. You try explaining that to people, that it's a cyclical process and they don't see it. That's my two cents anyway. It's nothing new. Shit bands then, shit bands now. "laughter"

**With the internet reducing isolation and making distance fairly irrelevant, do you think strong local sounds are still possible?**

**L:** People outside of Perth say that. They claim that there's a Perth sound-

**J:** I don't reckon there is. The ability to look stuff up - whatever. It's a double-edged sword. It can be really good, makes it really - if you're genuinely into something, and you want to delve into it further, you can. But at the same time if you're some gimpy little fuck who wants to just jump on a bandwagon, you can as well. It can go either way. It's really weird. Perth doesn't have a sound... that is something that you don't really see that much any more. Sounds defined by geography. You could say there's a New York sound, there's a Boston sound. There's a UK sound, it's so distinct. You don't really get that any more.

**L:** I think that's across all "art" now though. That's what happens. When you're not restricted by any kind borders in terms of your musical or artistic influences, you can just do it - You can take whatever the fuck you want and go with it. Instead of back when people were trading tapes - of course



there was a Perth sound.

**J:** I reckon it's fine though. It means people can make better music if they want to, y'know? And you still get subtle sounds associated with places, just not at noticeable any more.

**L:** There's no "UK82's anymore. The thing that defined the bands that defined whatever little Perth sound there was, was that they weren't the kind of bands that couldn't really leave a legacy that allowed it to be preserved. If we're talking RUPTURE and stuff, it's not like - They're probably not really things you can follow in the footsteps of, lifestyle-wise or musically. I think that's the thing with the Perth sound, it's too anachronistic to really be replicated.

**J:** Yeah, actually I guess you could totally argue that there was one, because all that nineties... All your RUPTURES and - god, all those crust... the handful of crust and grind bands they used to play with... (to Lee) is it CHACHEXIA? It's not my bag or whatever, but I think those bands left a pretty big legacy.

**L:** That's the thing, no-one's doing it in a way that gives it that Perth feel anymore. You can listen to CHICKENSHIT and look at the artwork and think Perth, Western Australia - but... I dunno, they just kinda closed the gate after themselves. No-one's taken that on since I think.

**J:** It's not the most popular style as well.

**L:** EXTORTION were probably the last band that even tried to make that link to the mid-to-late nineties stuff. Probably the last one that gave it a red-hot go then that was it. Even then that wasn't the same shit..

**J:** That scene, all the recordings were so low-fi, it's pretty inaccessible - which is cool in a way I guess.

**How do you think the scene of today will be remembered in say fifteen-twenty years? I mean for one example, the late-eighties had the youth-crew explosion, and so-on. What'll be the thing that people think of when they think of 2012 in that respect?**

**L:** I'll tell you what'll be representative of the 2012's: fucking Dubstep. That's our legacy globally.

**J:** Yeah, well if you're talking about good music... "laughter"

**L:** What's a good 00's sound?

**J:** I think what's happened now is just subtle rehashings, or twists on something that's been done before. You doing something old, but in a more novel way. Or ratcheting up the intensity. Cuz the things that we've seen in the last like ten years in the punk/hardcore realm... there was that big resurgence in powerviolence. The big changes we saw, really were making it sound heavier, mixing it with grind, stuff like that. Not really many new styles have come along. A lot of eighties revival stuff, again - maybe they make the vocals sound harsher or they'll change it up and mix it with a bit of garage or something like that. Ever more subtle manipulations of past trends and style of punk and hardcore is all we've really seen.

**L:** Anagrams rather than pure forms.

**J:** It's not we've had any new - where you've gone "this has come out of the 00's" like you were saying with Youth Crew and stuff.

**Yeah, first-time stuff.**

**O:** There was a whole group of bands trying to do that powerviolence thing, and that just wore off. Then there's heaps of bands doing Blackened Hardcore.

**J:** Which is kind of original..

**L:** Yeah, Blackened Hardcore and - would you agree - modern D-Beat, when they've taken DISCHARGE and started playing it really really fast, that's about the last-

**J:** It's like a D-Beat revival though hey.

**L:** It is different though, it's bigger, there's more solos, it's faster.

**J:** Yeah, Crasher-Crust or whatever. I guess you could argue that those things are fairly novel.

**O:** It's like modern D-Beat. They're pushing it. It's a much cleaner sound, more accessible than other stuff you hear.. It's still the same genre.

**J:** I guess you could say like the Youth Crew thing - I guess it was pretty different to everything else that was going on, really. Taking that eighties hardcore punk and then changing it up so it's pretty clean-sounding, that philosophical shift in what the songs were about. I guess we haven't had anything like that. I fucking hate Youth Crew though. "laughs"

**O:** Perth's certainly had a fixation on it for the past seven years.

**Has it been difficult to get distribution overseas? How easy is it for people to get your records?**

**L:** Really fucking hard in the US.

**J:** It's a tricky one.

**I'm surprised, because it seems like "Aussie bands" are kind of a cool thing to people over there in some circles-**

**L:** Shipping. Shipping and nothing else. That's the only thing that's really getting in the way of it. What's happening now as far as anything we've got going through Coffin Cut in that Havoc is distorting it, so they just take it straight from the plant, so for all our releases that go through Coffin Cut from now on, that's not really an issue. As far as previous stuff we've put out, it doesn't really make it past the border, I suppose.

**J:** I really should pull my finger out and get in touch with Grave Mistake because they're keen to distribute my other band (HELTA SKELTA), we should try and do as Lee said - get stuff sent straight from the plant. It is weird though, be-



cause there is that fixation with Aussie band in the US, but the style we play isn't hugely popular in the US at the moment- well, it kind of is, but we're not playing the most popular form of hardcore, but we're bordering on some other stuff that's... I think the US is really saturated by bands that don't sound exactly like us, but are like heavier hardcore bands, so I think me personally I've kind of preempted a lot of American distros not being interested, even though they might be - I should really just taste the water to be honest, rather than just assuming no-one going to be into it.

**Have you considered touring overseas then?**

**J:** Yeah, I would love to do it. None of us are millionaires.. We were talking about going to Indonesia. It's part of our five-year plan maybe. We need to try and tour a little bit more within Australia, maybe another one or two tours before we go overseas.

**L:** There's a few states we need to tick off, we haven't been to the Gold Coast or Brisbane.

**J:** Yeah, we need to win a few more hearts and minds in Australia, then Indonesia would be the sensible one to go to. From the sounds of it, it's a really fun place to tour and they're really appreciative of bands coming over and they get into it. It would be sick. Tentatively you could say we'll do it in a year or so?

**When you mentioning the artwork earlier it reminded me - another side-effect of the whole downloading thing is that it generally separates the music from everything else the band is producing in terms of sleeve art, lyrics inserts and what have you.**

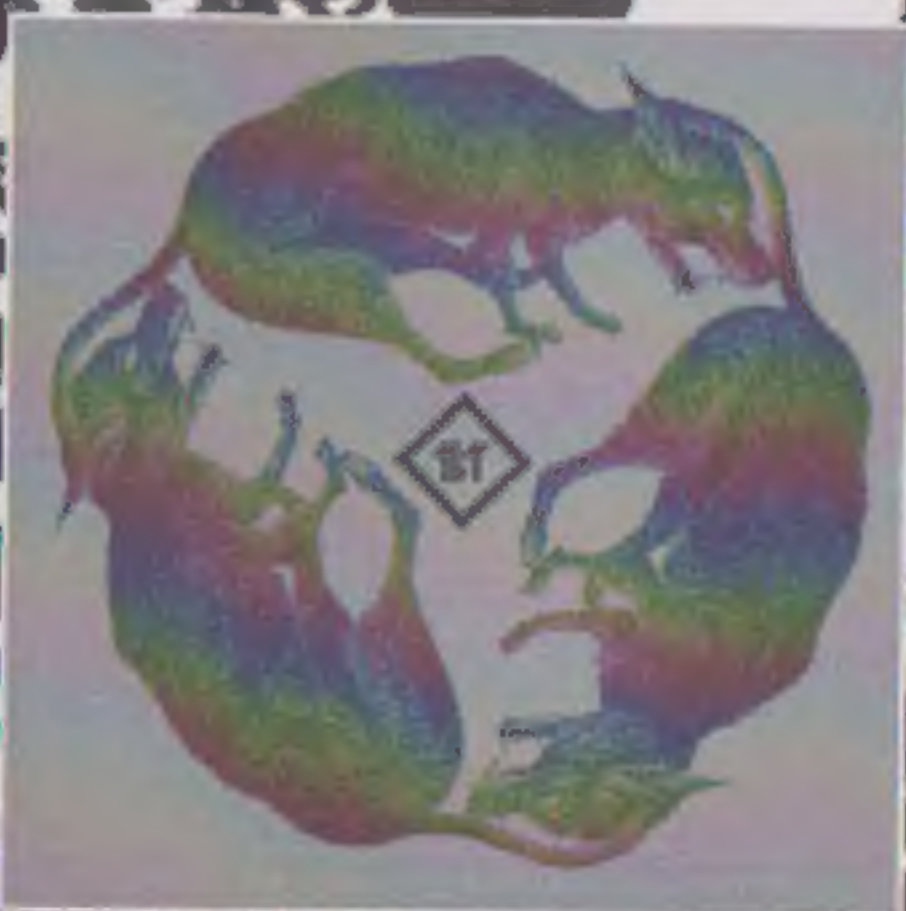
**J:** The closest you can get to that is when you download something from a label or whatever and you get a version of the cover that pops up on your computer when you play it. It is separated from the package and that's why people still buy vinyl in the first place.. It's a bit sterile.

**I suppose as well (especially with music like yours) people might not be able to pick up what you're saying from the sound alone, they're missing out on an important part of what the band's about.**

**J:** Yeah.. I reckon a lot of people don't read the lyrics though. It'd be nice if they did, but it's not poetry. It's a bit of a bummer. I don't know if we're going to do a download for the next few things we release, I think maybe we missed out on selling some copies of the last 12" because it was up for download at a negotiable cost. That's right isn't it?

**L:** Yeah, we're saying about doing it with the record. But the thing is- there is something to be said about downloading, especially these days when the vast majority of the time you listen to music at the place when you don't even have a turntable, but you definitely miss out on something that way. With us, specifically we do put time and effort into lyrics, artwork, presentation - even the format that suits the kind of release we're doing. We did that tape specifically as a tape, because that's how we felt those songs should be represented. I think a lot of people would rather go into the blogosphere and never come out of it.

**J:** I was just thinking then, you know what I really hate - when you read through the lyrics sheet of a record and they put the lyrics and then there's a little paragraph in italics explaining what the song's about. That's the fucking lamest thing ever.



**L:** DEAD IN THE DIRT do it.

**J:** Yeah, they get away with it. They're sick.

**L:** DEAD IN THE DIRT and PROPAGANDHI. No-one else is allowed.

**J:** Urgh, I don't like PROPAGANDHI.. DEAD IN THE DIRT are okay because they're awesome. *laughs* Glad I got that off my chest anyway.

**L:** I do agree though, because it deprives the listener the chance of reading the lyrics and deciphering them and going out and finding shit themselves and finding out what things are about.

**J:** "Oh look at me, I'm the unappreciated scholar to the morals who interpret my words in my thirty-second opus."

**How did you come to do the opening monologue at the start of the Dog 12"? what inspired that?**

**J:** I think we decided that's how we wanted the record to start. I was really happy with that. It took a while to write it. I guess because that record is about mental illness we wanted to have an atmospheric intro that sets the tone of the record, of an individual that's going through that cycle of mental illness. I threw a lot of stuff in there from my own experiences and what I've observed of people, and thought about what that experience involves. I wanted to make something that would make you feel quite uncomfortable. I think it worked, it set the tone of the record pretty well. It was fun to do as well, I don't know if we'll ever get the chance to do anything like that again.

**O:** Mixed feedback on that.

**L:** Oh yeah, definitely mixed feedback on that. Some people didn't understand it. I think it was good to set it out, because the whole idea is to try and get in the headspace of that particular individual.

**I don't know how you "couldn't understand" a bit of spoken word.**

**L:** Yeah I know!

**J:** I think some people thought that it was a kind of pretentious.. kind of.. I don't know what they thought was going on.

**O:** I think they thought it wasn't very hardcore.

**L:** "Spoken word, what's this?" - No-one's done that except Henry Rollins and ever cunt ever. *laughter*

**O:** "I wanna hear a mosh-riff".

**J:** Maybe they thought we were being a bit arty or whatever, up our own asses or something.

**Is this the same group of people who have all these problems with you, or a diverse spread of people who don't like you?** *laughter*

**L:** Kind of, it's all from the same forums stratosphere. All the shit-talking comes from the same place. So I guess "Yes", it's a similar group. Some people just find us indigestible for a variety of reason.

**J:** It's the kind of people who like really mainstream hardcore, modern hardcore or whatever. People in other states feel the same way don't like us as well. I guess it's the kind of people who listen to



something like that and be like "That isn't a hardcore record", y'know? It's not what they know it to be. Whatever.

When punk and hardcore started thirty years or so ago, it seemed like for a lot of people in the scene there was the idea that you could change the world and really make an impact culturally, and that was still conceivable because it was new and different. People still have that attitude now, y'know - the wide-eyed kind of optimism about it, even though it's kind of obvious that thirty years down the road, it's the same old shit, give or take.

J: A lot of the people that we don't really click with, they do think that. It's kind of the problem. I just get bummed out by their delusion and detachment from reality. It's an isolationist attitude, like if you have your little clique and you're all vegan and you don't drink and all go to shows then I think on some level they do think they're going to affect change, but on another level they're actually not thinking about anything. They'll go to their shows and go work at Ikeas or the Apple store or something, and it's like "Well you're not really actually making any change". And I find that quite offensive, on a fundamental level. The stupidity of that, and the futility of it. Hardcore punk - the stuff that clicks with me is the stuff that's just destructive, and negative and has no point - because how can it have a point? It's not really going anywhere. What's the point of any of it?

L: I'm kinda skeptical of social change through cupcakes. That's the main thing I'm skeptical of. Whatever.. I'm vegan and straight-edge and blah blah blah, but there's no delusion that my microcosm is going make any vast tidal wave of difference in the world. I'm not involved in it because I want that, it's egotistical to think that your vegan straight-edge hardcore band is going to change the world and your scene is going to.

J: Then again, on a conscious level I think a lot of people into hardcore don't actually think about changing anything. But they're copying someone who copied someone else that was idealistic and thought they were going to change something. That original person was a fuckhead as well. "laughter" But people down the light aren't even thinking about it, they're just more interested in the ritual, and that's just the most redundant thing ever. I just don't understand.

L: I've met a few people who are very genuinely, pro-actively and productively dedicated to social change and they're involved in hardcore and they fit certain moulds, but for every person I've met who's like that, whos level of involvement actually produces anything, there's way too many people



who for them it's just some awkward reason to get mad at people, be sensitive and make Facebook status updates about it. There's too many people using it as an excuse to attempt to stand out from the crowd, rather than actually do something worthwhile. I don't think that's Jon's thing.

J: It's important to realise that even your deviation from the path of mainstream norms and values is part of a predictable system.

O: You're preaching to the converted. Someone who listens to generic R'n'B, they're not going to come to your show and listen to your lyrics. It's flogging a dead horse really.

L: It's because it's closed-circuit that's the main problem. Musically, socially, the hardcore scene is so closed in on itself that you'll never achieve anything.

J: But if you do come to the table and play shows and have got genuine aggression, destructiveness is "arguably" more relevant. It's not going to change anything, but at least it's something, even if it's just catharsis for you. You're not championing a set of values that no-one cares about, in which case you may as well not bother. It's good, it definitely feels a lot more positive to not being aiming for anything, than to be having doublethink and saying you stand for things that you actually don't believe in or understand or don't actually try in any other way to make a reality. I could never be in a band like that.

END



Art by Lisa Ternes